

Challenges and Problems of a Working Woman

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Abstract: Social attitude to the role of women lags much behind the law. This attitude which considers women fit for only certain jobs and not others colours those who recruit employees. Women find jobs easily as teachers, nurses, secretaries etc. but even if well qualified women managers or geologists are available, preference will be given to a male of equal qualification. A gender creates a difference at the recruitment stage itself. The inbuilt convictions that women are capable of less work than men this injustice of unequal salaries and wages for the same job. The age old belief of male superiority over women creates several hurdles for women at their place of work. Conditioned by social and psychological tradition women colleagues too don't lend support to their own sex. These problems tend to make women less eager to progress in their careers. This paper will throw some light on the real condition of Indian working women and also make an effort to clear main problems of working women. A woman could still bear up with these problems if she had control over the money she earns. She has to almost always shoulder the burden of household chores as well. Working women in India are faced with lot more challenges than their counterparts in the other parts of the world. Women have started sleeping lesser than before because only when they wake up early they can cook for the family, get themselves ready for the job, and get their children ready for the schools, so on. This stress is passed on to the family and frustration level builds up in the family.

Key Words: Women Empowerment, Gender Discrimination, Sexual harassment, Employment, Working women.

Introduction:

We all talk of gender equality, woman empowerment and female education; but how far it has achieved in reality? Coming this far, evolving, civilizing, modernizing; the lot of women is very less changed in reality. To mark her identity, to be independent, to earn a living, to run her family or to support her husband run the family; there are numerous reasons today women step out of their home, to work and to earn women today are taking up new roles and challenges of work and career. Balancing between so many duties and obligations, a woman faces numerous challenges and problems every day, every time, and may be every second minute or second. Here a simplistic summary of what all a working woman has to face in her daily life, the challenges and the problems: The financial demands on the Indian families are becoming raise day by day. The sky rocketing cost of living, increasing expenses on education of children, increasing cost of housing properties in India force every family in India to look for ways and means of increasing the household income. As a result, women in India who were mostly known as homemakers are forced to go for jobs and take up even careers that were considered only suitable for men such as working in night shifts in call centers or BPOs.

Problems faced by working women:

- 1. Mental harassment:** It is an age old convention that women are less capable and inefficient in working as compared to men. The attitude which considers women unfit for certain jobs holds back women. In spite of the constitutional provisions, gender bias creates obstacles in their recruitment. In order to achieve success in corporate sector, women feel that they must do better than

their male colleagues. This leads to higher expectations and efficiency by their bosses and subordinates. A woman could still bear up with these problems if she controls over money that she earns but in most cases, their salary is handed over to father, husband or in laws. Therefore, main purpose for seeking employment to get independence is nullified in many cases.

2. Sexual harassment: Today, almost all working women are prone to sexual harassment irrespective of their status, personal characteristics and the types of their employment. They face sexual harassment on way on transports, at working places, educational institutions, and hospitals. If refused the boss takes out other means to make her life miserable. There have been several cases of sexual harassment recently involving even the senior women officials. If a woman is praised for her work or promoted on merit, her colleagues do not hesitate to attribute it to sexual favours.

3. Discrimination at Workplace: However, Indian women still face blatant discrimination at their workplaces. A major problem faced by the working women is sexual harassment at the work place. There is nothing that is done in hospitals to tackle and address the danger they face. Such blatant disregard of current Indian laws is one reason why sexual harassment at the workplace continues to increase. Indian women are often deprived of promotions and growth opportunities at work places but this doesn't apply to all working women. A majority of working women continue to be denied their right to equal pay, under the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 and are underpaid in comparison to their male colleagues.

4. Safety of Working Women while traveling: Typically, the orthodox mind set in the Indian society makes it difficult for a working woman to balance her domestic environment with the professional life. In some families, it may not be acceptable to work after six o'clock. Those families that do accept these working hours may experience considerable anxiety every day about a woman's safety while traveling. Further, many of them are physically and psychologically abused, by their in-laws and husband but they do not complain or let others know about it, particularly if they have children.

Top 5 health concerns of working women:

1. Insomnia: The number one cause for various health conditions including blood pressure. Working on computers or calls has become a norm in our work culture it is recommended that all work involving the screens or TV viewing should be stopped at least 2 hours before bedtime. Meditation also helps to a sure way to counter insomnia. Reading a good book before bedtime and taking hot milk or Chamomile tea help to relax you.

2. Obesity: Easy access to and affordability of fast or ready- to- eat food has increased the problem of obesity around the world. Obesity leads to depression, diabetes including knee problems. Avoiding gaps between meals, eating small portions at a time, eating balanced meals comprising complex carbohydrates protein [meat, poultry, curd, skim milk, nuts ,dals, fats, dairy products, fruits and raw vegetables is the key to weight loss. Always start meals with salad. Exercising daily is must. Remember to pair this with a healthy diet.

3. Polycystic Ovarian Disease [PCOD]: It can affect fertility and may require surgical intervention. Young women usually present with irregular menstrual patterns more and more cases of PCOD in younger women are coming to light today. PCOD [presents as a combination of excess], menstrual irregularities and what is called the Metabolic Syndrome. PCOD is completely curable by weight loss, decreasing insulin resistance by medication and adopting the practice of regular yoga and meditation.

4. Hypothyroidism: Hypothyroidism is difficult to spot till the symptoms are aggravated:- which includes fatigue, depression, weight gain, cold intolerance, coarse hair and constipation.

However, hypothyroidism is treatable we have seen innumerable patients who have gotten on with life as if they have no problem or disease and have treated hypothyroidism as a deficiency and just taken the prescribed replacement. In fact, they take it as a warning sign and start on a diet and exercise plan. So hypothyroidism can turn out to be a life changing event for a better future.

5. Musculoskeletal Issues: Like neck pain along with chronic fatigue is being seen due to women taking on.. They are daughters [responsible for aging parents], wives, mothers, and homemakers. They work from morning to night, eat poorly they do not forgive themselves. A good practical workout regimen is a must for every woman, as is a balanced diet. As we know so many women who go for external beautification diligently but never find the time or the money for a nutrition consultation. Working women must take nutrition advice every 3 months from a well-known nutritionist. Also, going to a yoga instructor is a must. Yoga offers guaranteed relief from back and neck pain and chronic fatigue.

Women Employment in India:

The results of operation of market forces are not always equitable, especially in India, where some groups are likely to be subjected to disadvantage as a result of globalization. Women constitute one such vulnerable group. Since the times immemorial, worth of the work done or services rendered by women has not been recognized. India is a multifaceted society where no generalization could apply to the entire nation's various regional, religious, social, and economic groups.

Another related aspect of life in India is that women are generally for home thus restricting their mobility and face seclusion. The women face constraints beyond those already placed on them by other hierarchical practices. These cultural rules place some Indian women, particularly those of lower caste, in a paradoxical situation. Even professional women find discrimination to be prevalent:- two-thirds of the women in one study felt that they had to work harder to receive the same benefits as comparably employed men.

Although most women in India work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, much of their work is not documented or accounted for in official statistics. Women plough fields and harvest crops while working on farms, women weave and make handicrafts while working in household industries, women sell food and gather wood while working in the informal sector. Additionally, women are traditionally responsible for the daily household chores [e.g., cooking, fetching water, and looking after children].

In the past, cultural restrictions were the primary impediments to female employment now however; the shortage of jobs throughout the country contributes to low female employment as well. Older women who have never worked in the formal sector are not likely to start working later in life. Throughout the economy, women tend to hold lower-level positions than men even when they have sufficient skills to perform higher-level jobs. Even if a woman is employed, she may not have control over the money she earns, though this money often plays an important role in the maintenance of the household. In Indian culture women are expected to devote virtually all of their time, energy, and earnings.

Conclusion:

Technological advancement results in retrenchment of women employees. No one thinks of appreciating their skills. Maternity leave is seldom given. It is easier to terminate the woman's employment and hire someone else. Trade Unions do little to ameliorate the lot of women workers. Women's issues do not occur on the priority list of most of the trade unions. Women going to work are often subject to sexual harassment. Public transport system is overcrowded and men take

advantage of the circumstances to physically harass women. Colleagues offer unwanted attention which can still be shaken off but a woman is placed in a difficult situation if the higher officer demands sexual favours. If refused the boss can easily take it out on the woman in other ways to make life miserable for her. There have been several cases of sexual harassment recently involving even the senior women officials. On the other hand if a woman is praised for her work or promoted on merit, her colleagues do not hesitate to attribute it to sexual favours. A fundamental change is required in the attitudes of the employers, policy makers, family members and other relatives and the public at large.

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